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great political problem of all ages cannot, at least in a community like that of the future America, be solved by the theory of the American constitution. The second has rested on the correlative evidence which points sharply to the conviction that the system of separate responsibility realized in the mechanism of the American government as a necessary consequence of its jealous restriction of substantial powers, will inevitably yield, as its foundation has yielded, to the mere pressure of necessity. The result is not one on which it is pleasant to look. It is not one which the country is prepared to accept, or will be soon in a temper to discuss. It is not one which it will hear announced by its professional politicians, who are not greatly accustomed to telling unpleasant truths. Nor is it here intended to point out, or even to suggest, the principles of reform. The discussion of so large a subject is matter for a lifetime, and will occupy generations. The American statesman or philosopher who would enter upon this great debate must make his appeal, not to the public opinion of a day or of a nation, however large or intelligent, but to the minds of the few persons who, in every age and in all countries, attach their chief interest to the working out of the great problems of human society under all their varied conditions.

HENRY BROOKS ADAMS.

ART. III. — COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS IN CHINA.

THE reform proposed in the organization of our civil service, which contemplates the introduction of a system of competitive examinations, makes an inquiry into the experience of other nations timely. England, France, and Prussia have each made use of competitive examinations in some branches of their public service. In all these states the result has been uniform, — a conviction that such a system, so far as it can be employed, affords the best method of ascertaining the qualifications of candidates for government employment. But in

these countries the experiment is of recent date and of limited application. We must look farther East if we would see the system working on a scale sufficiently large and through a period sufficiently extended to afford us a full exhibition of its advantages and defects.

It is in China that its merits have been tested in the most satisfactory manner; and if in this instance we should profit by their experience it would not be the first lesson we have learned from the Chinese nor the last that they are capable of giving us. It is to them that we are indebted, among other obligations, for the mariner's compass, for gunpowder, and probably also for a remote suggestion of the art of printing. These arts have been of the first importance in their bearing on the advancement of society,—one of them having effected a complete revolution in the character of modern warfare, while the others have imparted a mighty impulse to intellectual culture and commercial enterprise. Nor is it too much to affirm, that, if we should adopt the Chinese method of testing the ability of candidates, and of selecting the best men for the service of the state, the change it would effect in our civil administration would be not less beneficial than those that have been brought about by the discoveries in the arts to which I have referred.

The bare suggestion may perhaps provoke a smile; but does any one smile at the idea that we might improve our polity by studying the institutions of Egypt, Rome, or Greece? Are, then, the arrangements of a government that arose with the earliest of those states, and still exists in undecaying vigor, to be passed by as undeserving of attention? The long duration of the Chinese government and the vast population to which it has served to secure a fair measure of prosperity are phenomena that challenge admiration. Why should it be considered derogatory to our civilization to copy an institution which is confessedly the masterpiece in that skilful mechanism,—the balance-wheel that regulates the working of that wonderful machinery?

In the arts which we have borrowed from the Chinese we have not been servile imitators. In every case we have made improvements that astonish the original inventors. We em-

ploy movable type, apply steam and electricity to printing, use the needle as a guide over seas which no junk would have ventured to traverse, and construct artillery such as the inventors of gunpowder never dreamed of. Would it be otherwise with a transplanted competitive system? Should we not be able to purge it of certain defects that adhere to it in China and to render it productive of good results which it fails to yield in its native climate? I think, therefore, that I shall serve a better purpose than the simple gratification of curiosity if I devote a brief space to the consideration of the most admirable institution of the Chinese empire.

Its primary object was to provide men of ability for the service of the state, and, whatever else it may have failed to accomplish, it is impossible to deny that it has fulfilled its specific end, in a remarkable degree. The mandarins of China are almost without exception the choicest specimens of the educated classes. Alike in the capital and in the provinces, it is the mandarins that take the lead in every kind of literary enterprise. It is to them the Emperor looks to instruct as well as to govern his people; and it is to them that the publishers look for additions to the literature of the nation,—nine tenths of the new books being written by mandarins. In their social meetings, their conversation abounds in classical allusion; and instead of after-dinner speeches, they are accustomed to amuse themselves with the composition of impromptu verses, which they throw off with incredible facility. It is their duty to encourage the efforts of students, to preside at the public examinations, and to visit the public schools,—to promote, in short, by example as well as precept, the interests of education. Scarcely anything is deemed a deeper disgrace than for a magistrate to be found incompetent for this department of his official duties. So identified, indeed, are the mandarins with all that constitutes the intellectual life of the Chinese people, that foreigners have come to regard them as a favored caste, like the Brahmins of India, or as a distinct order enjoying a monopoly of learning, like the priesthood in Egypt.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Those stately officials for whom the people make way with such awe-struck

deference, as they pass along the street with embroidered robes and imposing retinue, are not possessors of hereditary rank, neither do they owe their elevation to the favor of their sovereign, nor yet to the suffrages of their fellow-subjects. They are self-elected, and the people regard them with the deeper respect, because they know that they have earned their position by intellectual effort. What can be more truly democratic than thus to offer to all "the inspiration of a fair opportunity"? In this genuine democracy China stands unapproached among the nations of the earth; for whatever imperfections may attach to her social organization or to her political system, it must be acknowledged that China has devised the most effectual method for encouraging effort and rewarding merit. Here at least is one country where wealth is not allowed to raise its possessor to the seat of power; where the will even of an emperor cannot bestow its offices on uneducated favorites; and where the caprice of the multitude is not permitted to confer the honors of the state on incompetent demagogues.

The institution that accomplishes these results is not an innovation on the traditional policy of the empire. It runs back in its essential features to the earliest period of recorded history. The adherence of the Chinese to it through so many ages well illustrates the conservative element in the national character; while the important changes it has undergone prove that this people is not by any means so fettered by tradition as to be incapable of welcoming improvements.

The germ from which it sprung was a maxim of the ancient sages, expressed in four syllables, *Kü hien jin neng*, — "Employ the able and promote the worthy"; and examinations were resorted to as affording the best test of ability and worth. Of Yushun, that model emperor of remote antiquity, who lived about B. C. 2200, it is recorded that he examined his officers every third year, and after three examinations either gave them promotion or dismissed them from the service. On what subjects he examined them, at a time when letters were but newly invented, and when books had as yet no existence, we are not told; neither are we informed whether he subjected candidates to any test previous to appointment; yet the mere fact of such a periodical examination established a precedent which has con-

tinued to be observed to the present day. Every third year the government holds a great examination for the trial of candidates, and every fifth year makes a formal inquisition into the record of its civil functionaries. The latter is a poor substitute for the ordeal of public criticism to which officials are exposed in a country enjoying a free press ; but the former, as we shall have occasion to show, is thorough of its kind, and severely impartial.

More than a thousand years after the above date, at the commencement of the Chan dynasty, B. C. 1115, the government was accustomed to examine candidates as well as officers ; and this time we are not left in doubt as to the nature of the examination. The Chinese had become a cultivated people, and we are informed that all candidates for office were required to give proof of their acquaintance with the five arts,—music, archery, horsemanship, writing, and arithmetic ; and to be thoroughly versed in the rites and ceremonies of public and social life,—an accomplishment that ranked as a sixth art. These “six arts,” expressed in the concise formula *li, yo, shay, yu, shu, su*, comprehended the sum-total of a liberal education at that period, and remind us of the *trivium* and *quadrivium* of the mediæval schools.

Under the dynasty of Han, after the lapse of another thousand years, we find the range of subjects for the civil-service examinations largely extended. The Confucian Ethics had become current, and a moral standard was regarded in the selection of the competitors,—the district magistrates being required to send up to the capital such men as had acquired a reputation for *hiao* and *lien*, —“filial piety” and “integrity,” —the Chinese rightly considering that the faithful performance of domestic and social duties is the best guaranty for fidelity in public life. These *hiao-lien*, these “filial sons and honest subjects,” whose moral character had been sufficiently attested, were now subjected to trial in respect to their intellectual qualifications. The trial was twofold,—first, as to their skill in the “six arts” already mentioned ; and, secondly, as to their familiarity with one or more of the following subjects: the civil law, military affairs, agriculture, the administration of the revenue, and the geography of the empire with special reference

to the state of the water communications. This was an immense advance on the meagre requirements of the more ancient dynasties.

Passing over another thousand years, we come to the era of the Tangs and the Sungs, when we find the standard of literary attainment greatly elevated, the graduates arranged in three classes, and officials in nine,—a classification which is still retained.

Arriving at the close of the fourth millennium, under the sway of the Mings and the Tsings of the present day, we find the simple trials instituted by Shun expanded into a colossal system, which may well claim to be the growth of four thousand years. It still exhibits the features that were prominent in its earlier stages,—the “six arts,” the “five studies,” and the “three degrees” remaining as records of its progressive development. But the “six arts” are not what they once were; and the admirers of antiquity complain that examinations are sadly superficial as compared with those of the olden time, when competitors were required to ride a race, to shoot at a target, and to sing songs of their own composition to the accompaniment of their own guitars. In these degenerate days examiners are satisfied with odes in praise of music and essays on the archery and horsemanship of the ancients.

Scholarship is a very different thing now from what it was in those ruder ages, when books were few, and the harp, the bow, and the saddle divided the student’s time with the oral instructions of some famous master. Each century has added to the weight of his burdens; and to the “heir of all the ages” each passing generation has bequeathed a legacy of toil. Doomed to die among the deposits of a buried world, and contending with millions of competitors, he can hardly hope for success without devoting himself to a life of unremitting study. True, he is not called upon to extend his researches beyond the limits of his own national literature; but that is all but infinite. It costs him at the outset years of labor to get possession of the key that unlocks it; for the learned language is totally distinct from his vernacular dialect, and justly regarded as the most difficult of the languages of man. Then he must commit to memory the whole circle of the recognized classics, and

make himself familiar with the best writers of every age of a country which is no less prolific in books than in men. No doubt his course of study is too purely literary and too exclusively Chinese, but it is not superficial. In a popular "Student's Guide," we lately met with a course of reading drawn up for thirty years! We proposed putting it into the hands of a young American residing in China, who had asked advice as to what he should read. "Send it," he replied, "but don't tell my mother."

But it is time to take a closer view of these examinations as they are actually conducted. The candidates for office, — those who are acknowledged as such, in consequence of sustaining the initial trial, — are divided into the three grades of *sin-ts'ai*, *chü-jin*, and *tsin-shi*, — "Budding Geniuses," "Promoted Scholars," and those who are "Ready for Office." The trials for the first are held in the chief city of each district or *hien*, a territorial division which corresponds to our county or to an English shire. They are conducted by a chancellor, whose jurisdiction extends over an entire province, containing, it may be, sixty or seventy such districts, each of which he is required to visit once a year, and each of which is provided with a resident sub-chancellor, whose duty it is to examine the scholars in the interval, and to have them in readiness on the chancellor's arrival.

About two thousand competitors enter the lists, ranging in age from the precocious youth just entering his teens up to the venerable grandsire of seventy winters. Shut up for a night and a day, each in his narrow cell, they produce each a poem and one or two essays on themes assigned by the chancellor, and then return to their homes to await the bulletin announcing their place in the scale of merit. The chancellor, assisted by his clerks, occupies several days in sifting the heap of manuscripts, from which he picks out some twenty or more that are distinguished by beauty of penmanship and grace of diction. The authors of these are honored with the degree of "Budding Genius," and are entitled to wear the decorations of the lowest grade in the corporation of mandarins. The successful student wins no purse of gold and obtains no office, but he has gained a prize, which he deems a sufficient compensation for

years of patient toil. He is the best of a hundred scholars, exempted from liability to corporal punishment, and raised above the vulgar herd. The social consideration to which he is now entitled makes it a grand day for him and his family.

Once in three years these "Budding Geniuses," these picked men of the districts, repair to the provincial capital to engage in competition for the second degree, — that of *chü-jin*, or "Promoted Scholar." The number of competitors amounts to ten thousand, more or less, and of these only one in every hundred can be admitted to the coveted degree. The trial is conducted by special examiners sent down from Peking; and this examination takes a wider range than the preceding. No fewer than three sessions of nearly three days each are occupied instead of the single day for the first degree. Compositions in prose and verse are required, and themes are assigned with a special view to testing the extent of reading and depth of scholarship of the candidates. Penmanship is left out of the account, — each production, marked with a cipher, being copied by an official scribe, that the examiners may have no clew to its author and no temptation to render a biased judgment.

The victor still receives neither office nor emolument; but the honor he achieves is scarcely less than that which was won by the victors in the Olympic games. Again, he is one of a hundred, each of whom was a picked man; and as a result of this second victory he goes forth an acknowledged superior among ten thousand contending scholars. He adorns his cap with the gilded button of a higher grade, erects a pair of lofty flag-staffs before the gate of his family residence, and places a tablet over his door to inform those who pass by that this is the abode of a literary prize-man. But our "Promoted Scholar" is not yet a mandarin, in the proper sense of the term. The distinction already attained only stimulates his desire for higher honors, — honors which bring at last the solid recompense of an income.

In the spring of the following year he proceeds to Peking to seek the next higher degree, the attainment of which will prove a passport to office. The contest is still with his peers, that is,

with other "Promoted Scholars," who like himself have come up from all the provinces of the empire. But the chances are this time more in his favor, as the number of prizes is now tripled, and if the gods are propitious his fortune is made. Though ordinarily not very devout, he now shows himself peculiarly solicitous to secure their favor. He burns incense and gives alms. If he sees a fish floundering on the hooks, he pays its price and restores it to its native element. He picks struggling ants out of the rivulet made by a recent shower, distributes moral tracts, or, better still, rescues chance bits of printed paper from being trodden in the mire of the streets. If his name appears among the favored few, he not only wins himself a place in the front ranks of the lettered, but he plants his foot securely on the rounds of the official ladder by which, without the prestige of birth or the support of friends, it is possible to rise to a seat in the grand council of state or a place in the Imperial Cabinet. All this advancement presents itself in the distant prospect, while the office upon which he immediately enters is one of respectability, and it may be of profit. It is generally that of mayor or sub-mayor of a district city, or sub-chancellor in the district examinations,—the vacant posts being distributed by lot, and therefore impartially, among those who have proved themselves to be "ready for office."

Before the drawing of lots, however, for the post of a magistrate among the people, our ambitious student has a chance of winning the more distinguished honor of a place in the Imperial Academy. With this view, the two or three hundred survivors of so many contests appear in the palace, where themes are assigned them by the Emperor himself, and the highest honor is paid to the pursuit of letters by the exercises being presided over by his Majesty in person. Penmanship reappears as an element in determining the result, and a score or more of those whose style is the most finished, whose scholarship the ripest, and whose handwriting the most elegant, are drafted into the college of Hanlin, the "forest of pencils," a kind of Imperial Institute, the members of which are recognized as standing at the head of the literary profession. These are constituted poets and historians to the Celestial Court, or

deputed to act as chancellors and examiners in the several provinces.

But the diminishing series in this ascending scale has not yet reached its final term. The long succession of contests culminates in the designation by the Emperor of some individual whom he regards as the *Chuang-Yuen* or model scholar of the empire,—the bright consummate flower of the season. This is not a common annual like the Senior Wranglership of Cambridge, nor the product of a private garden like the valedictory orator of our American colleges. It blooms but once in three years, and the whole empire yields but a single blossom,—a blossom that is culled by the hand of Majesty and esteemed among the brightest ornaments of his dominion. Talk of academic honors such as are bestowed by Western nations, in comparison with those which this Oriental empire heaps on her scholar laureate! Provinces contend for the shining prize, and the town that gives the victor birth becomes noted forever. Swift heralds bear the tidings of his triumph, and the hearts of the people leap at their approach. We have seen them enter a humble cottage, and amid the flaunting of banners and the blare of trumpets announce to its startled inmates that one of their relations had been crowned by the Emperor as the laureate of the year. And so high was the estimation in which the people held the success of their fellow-townsmen, that his wife was requested to visit the six gates of the city, and to scatter before each a handful of rice, that the whole population might share in the good fortune of her household. A popular tale, *La Bleue et La Blanche*, translated from the Chinese by M. Julien, represents a goddess as descending from heaven, that she might give birth to the scholar laureate of the empire.

All this has, we confess, an air of Oriental display and exaggeration. It suggests rather the dust and sweat of the great national games of antiquity than the mental toil and intellectual triumphs of the modern world. But it is obvious that a competition which excites so profoundly the interest of a whole nation must be productive of very decided results. That it leads to the selection of the best talents for the service of the public we have already seen; but beyond this—its

primary object—it exercises a profound influence upon the education of the people and the stability of the government. It is all, in fact, that China has to show in the way of an educational system. She has no colleges or universities,—if we except one that is yet in embryo,—and no national system of common schools; yet it may be confidently asserted that China gives to learning a more effective patronage than she could have done if each of her emperors were an Augustus and every premier a Mæcenas. She says to all her sons, “Prosecute your studies by such means as you may be able to command, whether in public or in private, and when you are prepared, present yourselves in the examination hall. The government will judge of your proficiency and reward your attainments.”

Nothing can exceed the ardor which this standing offer infuses into the minds of all who have the remotest prospect of sharing in the prizes. They study not merely while they have teachers to incite them to diligence, but continue their studies with unabated zeal long after they have left the schools; they study in solitude and poverty; they study amidst the cares of a family and the turmoil of business; and the shining goal is kept steadily in view until the eye grows dim. Some of the aspirants impose on themselves the task of writing a fresh essay every day; and they do not hesitate to enter the lists as often as the public examinations recur, resolved, if they fail, to continue trying, believing that perseverance has power to command success, and encouraged by the legend of the man who, needing a sewing-needle, made one by grinding a crowbar on a piece of granite.

We have met an old mandarin, who related with evident pride how, on gaining the second degree, he had removed with his whole family to Peking, from the distant province of *Yunnan*, to compete for the third; and how at each triennial contest he had failed, until, after more than twenty years of patient waiting, at the seventh trial, and at the mature age of threescore years, he bore off the coveted prize. He had worn his honors for seven years, and was then mayor of the city of Tientsin. In a list now on our table of ninety-nine successful competitors for the second degree, sixteen are over forty years of age, one sixty-two, and one eighty-three. The average age

of the whole number is above thirty ; and for the third degree the average is of course proportionally higher.

So powerful are the motives addressed to them, that the whole body of scholars who once enter the examination hall are devoted to study as a life-long occupation. We thus have a class of men, numbering in the aggregate many millions, who keep their faculties bright by constant exercise, and whom it would be difficult to parallel in any Western country for readiness with the pen and retentiveness of memory. If these men are not highly educated, it is the fault, not of the competitive system which proves its power to stimulate them to such prodigious exertions, but of the false standard of intellectual merit established in China. In that country letters are everything and science nothing. Men occupy themselves with words rather than with things ; and the powers of acquisition are more cultivated than those of invention.

The type of Chinese education is not that of our modern schools ; but, when compared with the old curriculum of languages and philosophy, it appears by no means contemptible. A single paper, intended for the last day of the examination for the second degree, may serve as a specimen. It covers five subjects, — criticism, history, agriculture, military affairs, and finance. There are about twenty questions on each subject, and whilst they certainly do not deal with it in a scientific manner, it is something in their favor to say that they are such as cannot be answered without an extensive course of reading in Chinese literature. One question under each of the five heads is all that our space will allow us to introduce.

1. “How do the rival schools of *Wang* and *Ching* differ in respect to the exposition of the meaning and the criticism of the text of the Book of Changes?”

2. “The great historian *Sze-ma-ts'ien* prides himself upon having gathered up much material that was neglected by other writers. What are the sources from which he derived his information?”

3. “From the earliest times great attention has been given to the improvement of agriculture. Will you indicate the arrangements adopted for that purpose by the several dynasties?”

4. “The art of war arose under *Hwangte*, 4400 years ago.

Different dynasties have since that time adopted different regulations in regard to the use of militia or standing armies, the mode of raising supplies for the army, etc. Can you state these briefly ? ”

5. “ Give an account of the circulating medium under different dynasties, and state how the currency of the *Sung* dynasty corresponded with our use of paper money at the present day.”

In another paper, issued on a similar occasion, astronomy takes the place of agriculture, but the questions are confined to such allusions to the subject as are to be met with in the circle of their classical literature, and afford but little scope for the display of scientific attainments. Still, the fact that a place is found for this class of subjects is full of hope. It indicates that the door, if not fully open, is at least sufficiently ajar to admit the introduction of our Western sciences with all their progeny of arts, a band powerful enough to lift the Chinese out of the mists of their mediæval scholasticism, and to bring them into the full light of modern knowledge. If the examiners were scientific men, and if scientific subjects were made sufficiently prominent in these higher examinations, millions of aspiring students would soon become as earnest in the pursuit of modern science as they now are in the study of their ancient classics.* Thus reformed and renovated by the injection of fresh blood into the old arteries, this noble institution would rise to the dignity of a great national university, — a university not like those of Oxford or Cambridge, which train their own graduates, but — to compare great things with small — like the University of London, promoting the cause of learning by examining candidates and conferring degrees. The University of London admits to its initial examination annu-

* As a sample of the practical bearing which it is possible to give to these examination exercises we take a few questions from another paper : —

“ Fire-arms began with the use of rockets in the Chan dynasty (B. C. 1100) ; in what book do we first meet with the word for cannon ? What is the difference in the two classes of engines to which it is applied ? (applied also to the catapult.) Is the defence of K'aifungfu its first recorded use ? Kublai Khan, it is said, obtained cannon of a new kind ; from whom did he obtain them ? The Sungs had several varieties of small cannon ; what were their advantages ? When the Mings, in the reign of Yungloh, invaded Cochin-China, they obtained a kind of cannon called the ‘ weapons of the gods ’ ; can you give an account of their origin ? ”

ally about 1,400 candidates, and passes one half. The government examinations of China admit about 2,000,000 candidates every year, and pass only one per cent.

The political bearings of this competitive system are too important to be passed over, and yet too numerous to be treated in detail. Its incidental advantages may be comprehended under three heads.

1. It serves the state as a safety-valve, providing a career for those ambitious spirits which might otherwise foment disturbances or excite revolutions. Whilst in democratic countries the ambitious flatter the people, and in monarchies fawn on the great, in China, instead of resorting to dishonorable acts or to political agitation, they betake themselves to quiet study. They know that their mental calibre will be fairly gauged, and that if they are born to rule, the competitive examinations will open to them a career. The competitive system has not, indeed, proved sufficient to employ all the forces that tend to produce intestine commotion; but it is easy to perceive that without it the shocks must have been more frequent and serious.

2. It operates as a counterpoise to the power of an absolute monarch. Without it the great offices would be filled by hereditary nobles, and the minor offices be farmed out by thousands to imperial favorites. With it a man of talents may raise himself from the humblest ranks to the dignity of viceroy or premier. *Tsiang siang pun wu chung*, — “The general and the prime minister are not born in office,” — is a line that every schoolboy is taught to repeat. Rising from the people, the mandarins understand the feelings and wants of the people, though it must be confessed that they are usually avaricious and oppressive in proportion to the length of time it has taken them to reach their elevation. Still, they have the support and sympathy of the people to a greater extent than they could have if they were the creatures of arbitrary power. The system, therefore, introduces a popular element into the government, — a check on the prerogative of the Emperor as to the appointment of officers, and serves as a kind of constitution to his subjects, prescribing the conditions on which they shall obtain a share in the administration of the government.

3. It gives the government a hold on the educated gentry, and binds them to the support of existing institutions. It renders the educated classes eminently conservative, because they know that in the event of a revolution civil office would be bestowed, not as the reward of learning, but for political or military services. The *litterati*, the most influential portion of the population, are for this reason also the most loyal. It is their support that has upheld the reigning house, though of a foreign race, through these long years of civil commotion, while to the "rebels" it has been a ground of reproach and a source of weakness that they have had but few literary men in their ranks.

In districts where the people have distinguished themselves by zeal in the imperial cause, the only recompense they crave is a slight addition to the numbers on the competitive prize list. Such additions the government has made very frequently of late years, in consideration of money supplies. It has also, to relieve its exhausted exchequer, put up for sale the decorations of the literary orders, and issued patents admitting contributors to the higher examinations without passing through the lower grades. But though the government thus debases the coin, it guards itself jealously against the issue of a spurious currency. Seven years ago Peiching, first president of the Examining Board at Peking, was put to death for having fraudulently conferred two or three degrees. The fraud was limited in extent, but the damage it threatened was incalculable. It tended to shake the confidence of the people in the administration of that branch of the government which constituted their only avenue to honors and office. Even the Emperor cannot tamper with it without peril. It is the Chinaman's ballot-box, his grand charter of rights; though the Emperor may lower its demands, in accordance with the wishes of a majority, he could not set it aside without producing a revolution.

Such is the Chinese competitive system, and such are some of its advantages and defects. May it not be feasible to graft something of a similar character on our own republican institutions? More congenial to the spirit of our free government, it might be expected to yield better fruits in this country than in

China. In British India it works admirably. In Great Britain, too, the diplomatic and consular services have been placed on a competitive basis; and something of the kind must be done for our own foreign service if we wish our influence abroad to be at all commensurate with our greatness and prosperity at home. When will our government learn that a good consul is worth more than a man-of-war, and that an able minister is of more value than a whole fleet of iron-clads? To secure good consuls and able ministers we must choose them from a body of men who have been picked and trained.

In effecting these reforms, Mr. Jenckes's bill might serve as an entering wedge. It would secure the acknowledgment of the principle — certainly not alarmingly revolutionary — that places should go by merit. But it does not go far enough. "It does not," he says, "touch places which are to be filled with the advice and consent of the Senate. It would not in the least interfere with the scramble for office which is going on at the other end of the Avenue, or which fills with anxious crowds the corridors of the other wing of the Capitol. This measure, it should be remembered, deals only with the inferior officers, whose appointment is made by the President alone, or by the heads of departments."

But what danger is there of infringing on the rights of the Senate? Is there anything that would aid the Senate so much in giving their "advice and consent" as the knowledge that the applicants for confirmation had proved their competence before a Board of Examiners? And would not the knowledge of the same fact lighten the burdens of the President, and relieve him of much of the difficulty which he now experiences in the selection of qualified men? Such an arrangement would not take away the power of executive appointment, but regulate its exercise. Nor would it, if applied to elective offices, interfere with the people's freedom of choice further than to insure that the candidates should be men of suitable qualifications. It may not be easy to prescribe rules for that popular sovereignty which follows only its own sweet will, but it is humiliating to reflect that our "mandarins" are so far from being the most intellectual class of the community.

WILLIAM A. P. MARTIN.